

## MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

### Shuswap Watershed Council opens Water Quality Grant Program for applications

The Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC) is inviting another round of applications to its Water Quality Grant Program, beginning December 1<sup>st</sup>.

“One of our objectives as a watershed council is to protect and maintain water quality in Shuswap and Mara Lakes,” explains Erin Vieira, program manager for the SWC. “We’re looking to partner with and support Shuswap-area farms to introduce new nutrient management strategies that will protect water quality while improving soil health.”

Vieira says the grant program has a particular focus on reducing nutrient inputs from the landscape to rivers and lakes. That’s because excessive amounts of nutrients, especially phosphorus, contribute to algal blooms which reduce the quality of water for drinking and recreation, and may become toxic to people, pets and livestock.

The Salmon Arm Bay area of Shuswap Lake was impacted by large algal blooms in the summer of 2020 and 2022.

“Water quality monitoring and research has shown us that agricultural lands in the Salmon River valley and Shuswap River valley are the biggest contributors of nutrients to the lakes,” Vieira says. “Therefore, our grant program is geared toward helping farms undertake projects or implement new practices to improve nutrient management and soil health.”

By doing so, nutrients such as phosphorus will be retained on the landscape and continually cycled in the soil, being used by crops and vegetation – not washing off into nearby creeks and rivers through rain, snowmelt, or erosion. It’s a win-win situation for farms and for water quality.

Up to \$55,000 is available in the current intake. Farmers, agri-businesses, hobby farmers, landowners, and stewardship groups within the Shuswap watershed are invited to apply. Applicants are required to contribute at least 50% of the total project cost in cash and/or in-kind contributions. Funding will be distributed to successful applicants in early 2024.



Since 2020 the SWC has provided 13 grants to Shuswap-area farms and stewardship groups for projects that protect water quality such as riparian planting and restoration, riverbank stabilization, wetland development, livestock fencing, manure and effluent storage, cover cropping, field drainage improvement, irrigation efficiency, and no-till agriculture.

Prospective applicants to the grant program can learn more from a short video the SWC produced in 2020, available on their YouTube channel ([youtube.com/@shuswapwater](https://youtube.com/@shuswapwater)).

The SWC recently published an updated water quality report that summarizes a research project done in partnership with UBC Okanagan. The report reveals the sources of nutrients to Shuswap and Mara Lakes and illustrates that nutrient levels in Mara Lake are on the rise.

See [Shuswap Watershed Council releases updated report on nutrients and water quality and announces grant opening in December](#).

More information about the grant program and an application package is available at [www.shuswapwater.ca](http://www.shuswapwater.ca). The application period is open from December 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 – January 31<sup>st</sup> 2024.

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About: The Shuswap Watershed Council is a watershed-based partnership organization that works on water quality and safe recreation in the Shuswap.

Contact: For more information, please contact Erin Vieira or Alex de Chantal c/o the Fraser Basin Council in Kamloops at 250 314-9660 and visit [www.shuswapwater.ca](http://www.shuswapwater.ca).